

## CLAIMS

1. An asset management system for managing an asset connectable to a computer network, said asset management system comprising:

storage means for storing the management information of an asset including information identifying the asset and information identifying a connection node of a computer network to which the asset is connected;

gathering means for gathering the management information included in information circulating over the computer network, and including information identifying an asset being managed and information identifying a connection node to which the asset is connected when it is determined that the information circulating over the computer network is information sent from the asset being managed or information addressed to the asset, based on information included in the information circulating over the computer network, to identify a sender and a destination of the information circulating over the computer network; and

updating means for comparing the gathered management information with the storage contents of the storage means and when the management information and the storage contents are not the same, updating the storage contents of the storage means by the gathered management information.

2. An asset management system according to claim 1,

wherein said management information includes information on a software asset executed by the asset.

3. An asset management system according to claim 1, wherein said management information includes information on a hardware asset constituting the asset.

4. An asset management system according to claim 2, wherein said management information includes information on a hardware asset constituting the asset.

5. An asset management system according to claim 1, wherein said management information includes information on classification as to whether the asset is a leased asset or not and information on a lease expiration date of the asset, further comprising means for comparing a current date and the lease expiration date of the asset, and means for providing a notification that the lease has expired when it is detected that the lease has expired as a result of the comparison by the comparing means.

6. An asset management system according to claim 2, wherein said management information includes information on classification as to whether the asset is a leased asset or not and information on a lease expiration date of the asset, further comprising means for comparing a current date and the lease

expiration date of the asset, and means for providing a notification that the lease has expired when it is detected that the lease has expired as a result of the comparison by the comparing means.

7. An asset management system according to claim 3, wherein said management information includes information on classification as to whether the asset is a leased asset or not and information on a lease expiration date of the asset, further comprising means for comparing a current date and the lease expiration date of the asset, and means for providing a notification that the lease has expired when it is detected that the lease has expired as a result of the comparison by the comparing means.

8. An asset management system according to claim 4, wherein said management information includes information on classification as to whether the asset is a leased asset or not and information on a lease expiration date of the asset, further comprising means for comparing a current date and the lease expiration date of the asset, and means for providing a notification that the lease has expired when it is detected that the lease has expired as a result of the comparison by the comparing means.

9. An asset management system according to claim 1, wherein said management information includes information on an amount of stock, a lower limit of amount of stock and an amount of

replenishment at one time of a consumable item consumed by the asset, said gathering means is provided with means for gathering information on the asset being out of a consumable item, and said updating means is provided with: means for, when it is detected that the asset is out of a consumable item, determining whether the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit after replenishment of the consumable item or not; and means for providing a notification that the consumable item is short of stock when the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit.

10. An asset management system according to claim 2, wherein said management information includes information on an amount of stock, a lower limit of amount of stock and an amount of replenishment at one time of a consumable item consumed by the asset, said gathering means is provided with means for gathering information on the asset being out of a consumable item, and said updating means is provided with: means for, when it is detected that the asset is out of a consumable item, determining whether the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit after replenishment of the consumable item or not; and means for providing a notification that the consumable item is short of stock when the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit.

11. An asset management system according to claim 3, wherein said management information includes information on an

amount of stock, a lower limit of amount of stock and an amount of replenishment at one time of a consumable item consumed by the asset, said gathering means is provided with means for gathering information on the asset being out of a consumable item, and said updating means is provided with: means for, when it is detected that the asset is out of a consumable item, determining whether the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit after replenishment of the consumable item or not; and means for providing a notification that the consumable item is short of stock when the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit.

12. An asset management system according to claim 4, wherein said management information includes information on an amount of stock, a lower limit of amount of stock and an amount of replenishment at one time of a consumable item consumed by the asset, said gathering means is provided with means for gathering information on the asset being out of a consumable item, and said updating means is provided with: means for, when it is detected that the asset is out of a consumable item, determining whether the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit after replenishment of the consumable item or not; and means for providing a notification that the consumable item is short of stock when the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit.

13. An asset management system according to claim 5,

wherein said management information includes information on an amount of stock, a lower limit of amount of stock and an amount of replenishment at one time of a consumable item consumed by the asset, said gathering means is provided with means for gathering information on the asset being out of a consumable item, and said updating means is provided with: means for, when it is detected that the asset is out of a consumable item, determining whether the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit after replenishment of the consumable item or not; and means for providing a notification that the consumable item is short of stock when the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit.

14. An asset management system according to claim 6, wherein said management information includes information on an amount of stock, a lower limit of amount of stock and an amount of replenishment at one time of a consumable item consumed by the asset, said gathering means is provided with means for gathering information on the asset being out of a consumable item, and said updating means is provided with: means for, when it is detected that the asset is out of a consumable item, determining whether the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit after replenishment of the consumable item or not; and means for providing a notification that the consumable item is short of stock when the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit.

15. An asset management system according to claim 7, wherein said management information includes information on an amount of stock, a lower limit of amount of stock and an amount of replenishment at one time of a consumable item consumed by the asset, said gathering means is provided with means for gathering information on the asset being out of a consumable item, and said updating means is provided with: means for, when it is detected that the asset is out of a consumable item, determining whether the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit after replenishment of the consumable item or not; and means for providing a notification that the consumable item is short of stock when the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit.

16. An asset management system according to claim 8, wherein said management information includes information on an amount of stock, a lower limit of amount of stock and an amount of replenishment at one time of a consumable item consumed by the asset, said gathering means is provided with means for gathering information on the asset being out of a consumable item, and said updating means is provided with: means for, when it is detected that the asset is out of a consumable item, determining whether the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit after replenishment of the consumable item or not; and means for providing a notification that the consumable item is short of stock when the amount of stock becomes less than the lower limit.

17. An asset management system for managing an asset connectable to a computer network, said asset management system comprising:

a storage medium for storing management information of an asset including information identifying the asset and information identifying a connection node of a computer network to which the asset is connected; and

a controller connected to said storage medium,

wherein said controller is capable of performing the following operations;

(i) gathering the management information included in information circulating over the computer network, and including information identifying an asset being managed and information identifying a connection node to which the asset is connected when it is determined that the information circulating over the computer network is information sent from the asset being managed or information addressed to the asset, based on information included in the information circulating over the computer network, to identify a sender and a destination of the information circulating over the computer network; and

(ii) comparing the gathered management information with a storage contents of the storage medium and when the management information and the storage contents are not the same, updating the storage contents of the storage medium by the gathered



18. An asset management system in which an asset management client of each section gathers management information of assets connectable to a computer network which assets belong to each section and an asset management server analyzes the management information gathered by the asset management client of each section to thereby manage assets of all the sections,

wherein said asset management client is provided with a storage medium for storing, in association with information identifying the belonging section of said asset management client, management information of an asset including information identifying an asset belonging to the section of said asset management client and information identifying a connection node of the computer network to which the asset is connected; and a controller connected to the storage medium, and said controller is capable of gathering the management information of the asset

belonging to the section of said asset management client which management information is included in information circulating over the computer network and includes information identifying an asset, being managed, of the section of said asset management client and information identifying a connection node to which the asset is connected when it is determined that the information circulating over the computer network is information sent from the asset, being managed, of the section of said asset management client or information addressed to the asset, based on information included in the information circulating over the computer network, to identify a sender and a destination of the information circulating over the computer network, and

wherein said asset management server is further provided with a controller connected to the storage medium and said controller is capable of analyzing the management information of an asset belonging to each section which management information is gathered by the asset management client of each section, comparing the management information with the storage contents of the storage medium and when the management information and the storage contents are not the same, updating the storage contents of the storage medium by the gathered management information.

19. An asset management method in which an asset management client of each section gathers management information of assets connectable to a computer network which

assets belong to each section and an asset management server analyzes the management information gathered by the asset management client of each section to thereby manage assets of all the sections, said asset management method comprising:

a step in which said asset management server stores in a storage medium a master file where management information of an asset is registered, said management information including information identifying each section, information identifying an asset belonging to each section and information identifying a connection node capable of connecting the asset at each section to the computer network;

a step in which said asset management client stores management information of an asset in a storage medium in association with information identifying the belonging section of said asset management client, said management information including information identifying an asset belonging to the section of said asset management client and information identifying a connection node of the computer network to which the asset is connected;

a step in which said asset management client gathers the management information of an asset belonging to the section of said asset management client which management information is included in information circulating over the computer network and includes information identifying an asset, being managed, of the section of said asset management client and information identifying

a connection node to which the asset is connected when it is determined that the information circulating over the computer network is information sent from the asset, being managed, of the section of said asset management client or information addressed to the asset, based on information included in the information circulating over the computer network, to identify a sender and a destination of the information circulating over the computer network; and

a step in which said asset management server analyzes the management information of an asset belonging to each section which management information is gathered by the asset management client of each section, compares the management information with the storage contents of the storage medium and when the management information and the storage contents are not the same, updates the storage contents of the storage medium by the gathered management information.